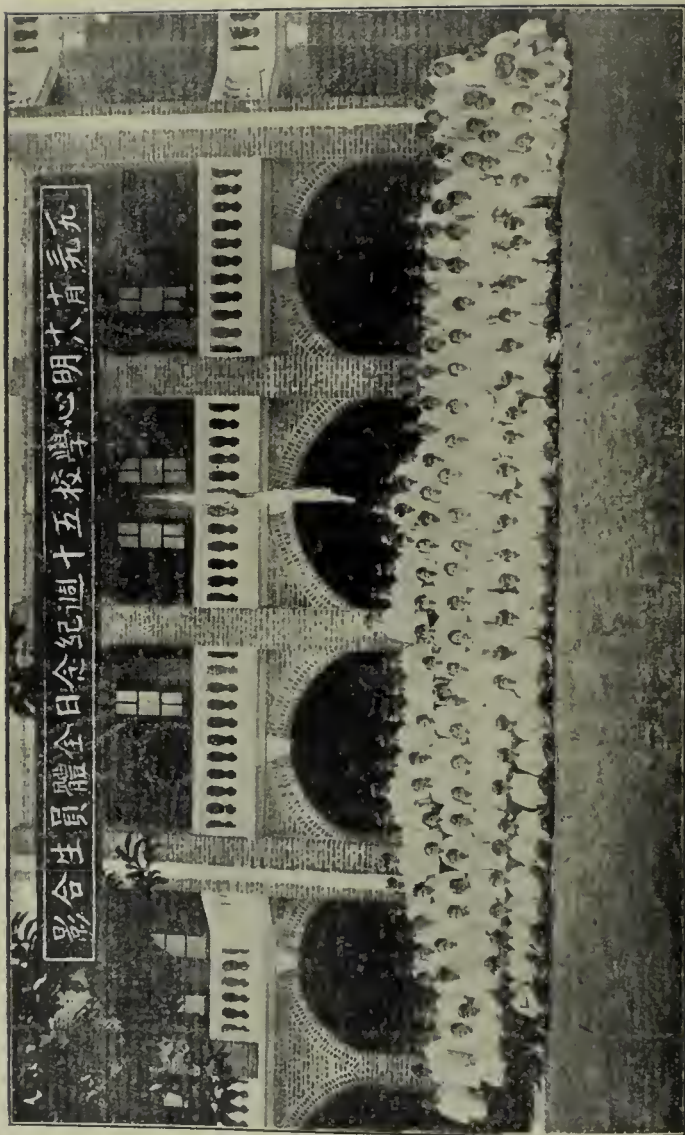




Fiftieth Anniversary of Ming Sum School.

ON the afternoon of October 18, 1939, there took place in Canton an event that would have been noteworthy even under normal conditions. An audience of about three hundred guests met to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Ming Sum School for the Blind. A more representative group would be difficult to imagine. Graduates of the school, employed in various capacities in the community, returned for the occasion. There were diverse creeds, all walks of life, various professions and many nationalities—all met to do honor and to rejoice in a great work well done.

The chief speaker was Rev. Herbert F. Thomson, Chairman of the Ming Sum Board of Directors. The speaker's relation with the school is quite unique, in that both came into existence the same year; also, they were attended at this tender period by the same physician, Dr. Mary W. Niles. Even more, the parents of Mr. Thomson knew Dr. Niles in the United States before she came to the Canton Hospital as a medical missionary of the American Presbyterian Church. Mr. Thomson's address was translated into Chinese by Rev. Calvin Lee, whose family accepted Christianity following the enrollment in Ming Sum of the eldest daughter, Miss Suet Kei Lee, now the head blind teacher on the Ming Sum faculty.



*Pupils and Staff of Ming Sum School for the Blind
October 18, 1939*

In reviewing the history of the school, Miss Lee chose four topics on which to speak. The first dealt with Dr. Niles coming to Canton in 1882. Her determination to try to help some of the blind girls whom she saw in the Canton Hospital and on the streets led to the opening in 1889 of Ming Sum School with a few girls.

Second, Miss Lee spoke of the staff who have helped to make Ming Sum a school. In the early days, the Berlin Mission in Hong Kong sent a blind woman to teach Braille and hand-work. The number of students increased and Dr. Niles asked Miss Margaret Chau, a graduate and later a teacher, of True Light School, to teach at Ming Sum. Miss Chau ably held this position for thirty-three years. Dr. Niles did three kinds of work—she served as a doctor, did medical translation and administered Ming Sum. In 1902 Miss Lucy Durham was sent from the United States to work with Dr. Niles and she served Ming Sum well for twenty-eight years.

Third, as regards education, the progress of the school has been marked. At first only Bible and handwork were taught. Gradually all subjects were taught as in schools for the sighted, and the same standards held. Last year Junior High School was begun.

In speaking of the plant, Miss Lee told how in 1889 Dr. Niles borrowed a small place in the old True Light School for her blind girls. As more girls came she rented an additional building. In 1906 she bought the present property in Fong Tsuen. After two years of living in mat sheds, the school was moved into the central Ming Sum building, which was only half finished. There was not enough money to complete the structure until Dr. Niles had returned from the United States with funds raised by friends there. Gifts came from other countries, also, so that now there are three dormitories, one dispensary building, and the Mary Niles Hall, in which the meeting was held. Miss Lee expressed hope for fifty more years, even brighter than these.

The Ming Sum School is administered by the South China Mission of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Under the direction of Miss Aliee M. Carpenter, Principal, Dr. Suet Ching Wong, Co-principal, Miss Alice H. Schaefer and their qualified staff of both blind and sighted Chinese women, they have, under difficult circumstances, maintained high standards consistent with those of the past.

The school is conspicuous for its excellency in the interpretation of music. Years of singing together under unusual teachers have brought a richness of harmony that comes from the soul. From the blind industrial workers' group to the smallest tots, each class contributed to the program with singing, piano solos and duets, mouth organ ensembles, and offerings of their own choice. The audience felt that this was a gala day out of the happy lives of those who belong to Ming Sum, the "School of the Understanding Heart".

Grace M. Rupert

Mary W. Bischoff, R. N.

Hackett Medical Center

Canton

Sketch of Some Activities in Canton, China

(Through no fault of Miss Durham's nor of the Staff of Ming Sum School, this letter was received in Canton too late to be included in the Fiftieth Anniversary booklet for which it was written.)

IN the autumn of 1902 I, Miss Lucy Durham, arrived in Canton after ten years of mission work among the Chinese in San Francisco, starting in connection with the Occidental Board as house visitor in Chinatown. By memorizing parts of little books prepared in China for such work, women and children were soon found who would accept books from me, and I could tell them the words on the first few pages. They were encouraged to ask help of the men of their families. Soon parts of Gospels were given them and when I was able to tell them of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world and of the Heavenly Father who deeply loves all of His people in the world, this news was the main subject in our visits, and little books about God and Christ were accepted by them.

With this limited knowledge of Chinese books and conversation, the venture to go to China was made. On arrival Dr. Niles planned country trips to see if the newcomer would be understood as she addressed meetings in Chapels. Women gave a warm welcome in many places in the Three Districts and in the Four Districts. Some had received letters from relatives in America, men whom I had taught English in the night school and the Presbyterian Church and elsewhere.

In December 1902 the Presbyterian Mission asked me to join them in intineration among women. In January 1903 such work was planned and offered to me. For thirteen years I joyfully spent much time in the various districts. All this time my home was with Dr. Niles and I had duties connected with Ming Sum School for the Blind. There was an English book of Braille music in the school library with explanations and examples of the written music. I studied the system and taught a bright pupil to write some music scores.

At that time Miss Chau Wai Tsz was the only teacher in Ming Sum School. I consulted her and she helped me to teach this pupil. Later she became expert in reading, writing and teaching this system and trained blind girls to be teachers of Braille music.

Letters began to come for information about Braille music for the Blind; then for the written music and for blind teachers of music.

In 1906 Dr. Niles bought land opposite Shameen, not far from the south bank of the Pearl River. Then filling of low land and mat houses on high stilts were prepared for the school, while the land was being raised. Soon walls, fences and one storey houses were built on the western border of the land.

Then plans for a missionary residence were made and given to an architect to examine and make drawings, blue prints and specifications according to building laws in Hong Kong. Our three storey and high attic house was made to be a place safe from storms, heat or cold. Later it became my responsibility to make plans for all of the other buildings. This occupied some of the time between country trips.

After severe illness the country work for women was largely left by the Canton Station to Biblewomen, till other missionaries could take up this important work.

Duties connected mostly with the school absorbed the years that followed until at the age of seventy-seven a final farewell to the work and people so dear to me separated us in 1930.

The nine years have been full enough of responsibilities, for time to serve others in special ways, to make new friends and visit the long time friends.

With loving greetings to all my old friends, natives or foreigners and continued prayers for the whole land of China.

Sincerely yours,


Lucy Durham

263 South Avenue, 51

Los Angeles, California

July 10, 1939,

Behind the Scenes

 O many interesting things transpired behind the scenes at the time of Ming Sum's Fiftieth Anniversary, and even before, that we want to share some of them with you who read THE TORCH.

Of the weeks of practicing and rehearsing nothing need be written, for that is a familiar part of every public performance. But upon the new uniforms, the school flag, the badges, the dress rehearsal and the feast in the garden, we would lift the curtain for a momentary glimpse.

The white material for the new uniforms was ordered early in July from the weavers at the Lingnan Refugee Camp. The red cloth for trimming was sent up from Hong Kong. Then many weeks were spent in cutting, sewing and fitting. The result was a neat and becoming coat of white, edged in red for each pupil and teacher. This was made possible by gifts from friends.

The new school flag was also a source of satisfaction and the result of cooperation. The son of Ming Sum's former carpenter drew the Ming Sum symbol, the torch, upon a large piece of white muslin. This and the Chinese characters were beautifully embroidered in red by one of the refugees at the Lingnan Camp.

The idea of the flag suggested a small badge of similar design for each student and staff member. Some of the teachers worked tirelessly in order to finish them in time for the anniversary.

The foreign members of the staff were much surprised when teachers and pupils appeared in their new uniforms at the final rehearsal the day before the program. But Dr. Wong explained that it is customary to wear the new clothes the day before the birthday as it extends the birthday and signifies a wish for long life. Said she, "We are celebrating our 'mother's' birthday tomorrow. Therefore we wear the new uniforms today."

The 18th of October was bright and sunshiny. The entire school assembled in the garden at noon under the American flag for the anniversary pictures which appear in this issue of the TORCH. New flags, gay poinsettias, new red paint, new uniforms, new red greeting scrolls all worked together to present a cheerful, festive appearance to the three hundred guests who crowded our Mary Niles Hall. Comments on the program appear elsewhere.

It was a happy family that gathered together in the garden the next evening to partake of the birthday feast. Contented murmurs arose from each table. But above and beyond all gaiety and festivities, brooded a spirit of real thanksgiving that the school had been led safely through the joys and trials of fifty years and that such a happy celebration was possible—perfect in every respect—with none to hinder and so many to help.



*"This is the way we wash our clothes"
for our anniversary guests.*

Christmas at Ming Sun

"~~W~~E have never had such a happy Christmas." This remark made by a Junior High School girl may sound startling to those who have been feeling very sorry for us. How everything worked together to make her statement true is the story of a modern miracle. In the first place there was the problem of where, in a city of no stores, to purchase gifts for teachers and children. The Paak Hok Tung Refugee Camp gave one answer and an order was placed there for enough towels to be made to supply the entire school. Bars of soap left over from last year, toothbrushes conjured up from somewhere, oranges and cakes made full hands and pockets. One friend gave each person an envelope containing twenty cents worth of pennies (28 pennies) to be spent penny by penny for any dainties they might buy. Then one sunny morning the officers and men of the U.S.S. Mindanao sent the school a gift of 50 pounds of beef. This would have been a real treat even if the school had been having meat regularly, for there never was more delicious food than that real American beef.

On December 16th the festivities started with the annual concert given for the Women's International Club. This program was repeated on the 20th for any friends who cared to come. The little boy soloist whose voice rang out clear and true, only a year ago was begging on the streets of the ruined city. This in itself was a miracle of transformation.

On the 19th of December the Junior High School girls and the eight little girls who add such joy to a program by their gay motion songs, went to the U.S.S. Mindanao for a special Christmas party. Their laughter rang out as they carried on conversations with classmates through the speaking tubes. Their hands eagerly sought out and "saw" pilot wheel, guns and anything else a kind group of officers and men produced. And food! One could never forget the sight of a little girl who, having finished sandwiches and a huge piece of cake, mouth stuffed to overflowing with a second piece, mumbled "Yes, please" to the question, "Would you like another piece of cake?" One of the little ones said later, "I've never had such a good time in all my life."

The Industrial group and the Junior High School girls were able to share their joy by taking part in Christmas services at Hackett Medical Center and at some of the city churches.

But I think the thing that brings the greatest joy and calm of spirit to those of us who live at Ming Sum is the singing of carols at midnight on Christmas Eve. The beauty of that single hour is indescribable. This year the night was clear and still. Bright stars and brighter moonlight gave an unearthly beauty to our garden. A hush of expectancy seemed to hang over the world as it must have hung on that first Christmas night. Perhaps it was only in our hearts. Then at midnight the first note of a lovely old carol broke the stillness. The voices seemed to echo and reverberate until they must have reached around the world. For an hour we were transported far from war back to the manger at Bethlehem with its message of "peace on earth, good will to men."

Yes, it was a happy Christmas, made possible by the modern miracle of kind friends sharing their interest and their money, the miracle of hearts so filled with joy that they must overflow, the miracle of such peace abiding within, that the want of peace without but makes the more desirable the eternal spirit of Christmas.

(This was written by Miss Schaefer and it beautifully expresses the joy she felt in being at Ming Sum on Christmas Eve for the first time since 1923)



One of the sailors of the U.S.S. Mindanao helps a little girl to "look at" the big gun.

The Christmas Concert

THE boats of Ming Sum to carry us ashore, a personal welcome at the decorated barrier gate at the water front, the spacious school grounds ablaze with poinsettias, their gayety repeated in the bright red curtains screening the stage of the open-air auditorium which had been turned into an informal room with rugs and easy chairs all gave a feeling of festivity. At the right of the auditorium, under a mat-shed roof were massed the expectant faces of the pupils of Ming Sum, with their new "Torch" badges. We gathered with eager anticipation, women of many nationalities, for the Christmas program with which the students and teachers entertain the Women's International Club each December. For some fifteen years we have enjoyed the unforgettable carols, so beautifully sung, but never have they been lovelier or in more beautiful setting than on December sixteenth of this past year, when in the midst of a world and city shattered by the horror of war and hate, their message of joy and love came to each with a real benediction.

As the invisible pianist with her seeing fingers released the strains of the "First Nowell", "Hark the Herald Angels", and "O Little Town of Bethlehem", they were taken up by the scores of voices until the place was filled indeed with the angels' song. Then came the High School girls, singing in their clear gentle English, "Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella", after which the whole school shared with us the wonder of "Holy Night."

Before the red curtains, the younger children with their bells and happy ways brot to our eyes and ears, thru their motion songs, the joys of their daily lives and of the Christmas time.

But the most unique feature of the program was the presentation of "Christmas in Art". Four tableaux, representing four famous Biblical paintings told progressively the Christmas message from "prophets foretold" to the coming of the Wise Men, while the voice of the unseen reader and the carols of the school gave the interpretation.

“Isaiah”: after Sargent’s “Frieze of the Prophets” was portrayed in almost breath-taking beauty and dignity as we listened to “O Come Emmanuel”. The “Annunciation”, after Rossetti, carried its message thru “Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus”, while we entered into the wonder and reverence of the scene. The “Arrival of the Shepherds”, after Le Rolle, with its wealth of detail and tenderness and intimacy of setting was echoed in the solo of the tiny child who sang “O Holy Night” clearly and with simple dignity in English, the school joining in the chorus. “The Star of Bethlehem”, after Burne-Jones, with its richness of coloring and splendor of costume was fittingly interpreted by the “Three Kings of Orient”.

We shall not forget the little “king”, who because he was in costume, was sitting apart from the main body of the school, and whose voice thru the subsequent singing rose separate from the others, true and sure.

Our hearts were full, as at the close we too joined in the joyous chorus of fulfilment, “Joy to the World”. Someone remarked after the program, “Now Christmas has begun”.

Mabel D. MacDonald (Mrs. W. E.)
Lingnan University
Canton.

O, Holy Child of Bethlehem!
Descend to us we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us today!
We hear the Christmas angels,
The great glad tidings tell.
O, come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel!

A Ming Sun Extension

WHEN churches are dependent upon occasional visits from the few ministers remaining in the city, Christmas plans are difficult. Ming Sun School for the Blind responded gladly to the need of two churches for a special feature for Christmas Sunday, and sent two groups of girls to sing.

At the Tsat Chi Yung church there were but three men beside the minister. The thirty women and fifty children obviously enjoyed the singing. At the Fung Loi Sai Lo church there were some twenty adults, less than half of whom were men, and sixteen children. The greater part were clad in garments eloquent of bitter losses of the past months.

The usual going out and coming in of children disturbed the pastor not at all. Girls with small ones on their backs stood for the most part at the back of the room. A crowd of street urchins who had followed the Ming Sun girls stayed in the courtyard to play. After the sermon the minister asked the Ming Sun girls to sing,—these girls in trim blue coats, each wearing proudly the school badge whose torch seems to say, "We too have the light." One of their number explained the meaning of the songs they were about to sing as no song in Chinese is understandable because the tones of the spoken language are lost in the singing. As they sang all eyes were riveted upon them. The girls with wee ones on their backs moved forward. The children who had gone out slipped back into their seats, attentive. The urchins dropped their play and gathered inside the door. An old woman was drawn in, straining nearsighted eyes toward the unaccustomed sound. All seemed to feel as did the minister at Tsat Chi Yung who said, "Their singing is like voices from Heaven."

*Gertude Hill
Edna M. Burkwall
Hackett Medical Center
Canton*

Canton, China
2 January 1940.

The Students and Staff,
Ming Sum School,
Canton.

Dear Friends:

I wish that words could be found to tell you how much we of the U.S.S. MINDANAO have enjoyed your visits to our ship. We are always happy to have our friends visit us but it gives us much pleasure indeed when these friends are as enthusiastic and appreciative as you have been. Our officers and men are glad to show and explain to you things of interest about the ship because you are so quick to understand and remember so well what is told you.

When you have come out to our ship a few more times you will know everything possible about it and can then start a Navy of your own in your school sampans.

We hope that the New Year will be a happy one for you all and a successful one for the School. We shall plan some more visiting days for you sometime soon and want you to come prepared to sing your songs which we enjoy so much.

With every good wish.

Sincerely,

C. E. CONEY,
Commander, U.S. Navy
Commanding, U.S.S. MINDANAO.



American sailors guide the "seeing" hands of a small Ming Sum girl on her first visit to the U. S. S. Mindanao.

Ming Sum Shares The Light

IN December 22, 1939 we watched seventy two Chinese children, who could see, enjoy a Christmas program in the garden next door to Ming Sum. A blind young woman, Miss Laai, a teacher in Ming Sum was in charge of the program. She had worked with the seeing staff to train the children in their various accomplishments. The boys and girls were from this neighborhood where the schools have been closed and had been gathered into classes only three weeks before because Ming Sum and other friends had a vision of giving them the light too.

There that day were represented many groups—the United Brethern Mission whose house and garden have been loaned for the classes, the Pooi Ying School, whose tables and chairs we have borrowed from the school house where the boys used to have a school for the neighborhood children, the New Zealand Presbyterian Mission through Mr. and Mrs. Davies who have helped with the salary of one of the teachers and whose son in New Zealand has sent some money to help, the Language School of past years in the person of the son of one of the oldest teachers who taught tones to so many foreigners, this son now taking his place as a teacher of these children. Then too, the young man in charge of the classes under Miss Laai, is the son of the contractor whose family so long has built for Ming Sum. (Already the boys are much neater because this young man is their model). Ming Sum has the part of advisor and solicitor of funds and giver of advice when necessary, and also gives the time of one music teacher and part time of another.

It was a special joy to see the children that day as they sang the songs we all know and some of their own that they love too. They acted out Bible stories in the priceless style of born Chinese actors and added the dramatic interpretation of another folk story or two. There were the usual treats after the program so the party was complete.

It continues to be a joy to see the young teachers carry out new ideas and to hear the children happily busy each day. The future of it all is beyond our thinking but TODAY they are learning and growing, surrounded by light and love which cannot but leave happy, helpful memories. Ming Sum knows her neighbors better for living with their children some of each day of the week. All of us feel it is done in the name of the One who said, "I am the Light of the world".

Alice M. Carpenter

The following was contributed by
Dr. Homer V. Bradshaw of Linehow, South China.
Dr. and Mrs. Bradshaw while living at Ming Sum helped many little "fingers and ears to see."

To a Blind Child—

What more than other mothers' is my task?
They, too, guide little feet and play small games
And read aloud of fairies and of elves.
What more shall I?

Because your world is peopled with our voices
Mine shall be gentle, and I shall restrain
Each pitying word;
But, rather speak of Homer and of Milton,
Of all the great blind men the world reveres.

I shall require, in childish bumps and bruises,
That you be brave;
That you may grow in valor as in stature—
You will have need of bravery, my son.

I shall laugh often that you may learn laughter,
And I shall sing, to teach your small lips song;
I shall not make you lean upon my eyesight
But teach your fingers and your ears to see.

Frances Ruth Davidson
from Hygiea, January 1939

These Carry The Torch



THE name of one of our graduates is Lin Yau Cheung. About ten years ago Miss Cheung went to a country church to work. She has been teaching some lessons to the sighted children and the Sunday School and plays the organ for every meeting. Sometimes on market days she went to the market to talk about Jesus. Many people stopped to listen. Therefore several women joined the church because of her preaching. Twelve years ago another one of our graduates married one of the Christians of that same church. She had a little girl. The little girl is seven years old now. How unfortunate that the woman's husband died last year. One of the foreigners wanted to help her find some work to do but she had been married twelve years and had forgotten how to play the organ and how to knit. Then Miss Cheung taught her again and the little girl took her mother to the church every day. Since this woman's husband died, many times she and her little girl had nothing to eat. How fortunate there is a Canton Association for the Blind to help her with some money every month. If there were no such Association, the little girl and her mother would starve to death.

Suet Kei Lei
Ming Sum School

EIGHT Junior High School girls carried the Ming Sum torch as they sang at a memorable meeting at Yan Tsai Church in Canton on December 28, 1939. With two seeing matrons and one American teacher they crossed the river that day, walked across Shameen and through the city streets where they had not been for over a year. Their destination was the Yan Tsai church where was being held a meeting to honor Dr. Chi In Ting who had just completed fifty years as elder of that church. After the girls sang he expressed special delight that they had come for he knew Dr. Niles before she started Ming Sum and he has watched the growth of the school all through the years. Dr. Niles was his teacher and friend of more than four decades. He assured the girls of his continued interest in all at Ming Sum.

MRS. P. J. Todd asked Ming Sum if one of the girls could teach in the boys' orphanage that she is helping with under the direction of the Rev. Samuel Kam of the Cumberland Presbyterian Mission in the Y. W. C. A. in Canton. The right girl was chosen and it would be a revelation to all if you could see, as some of us have seen, this young woman Miss Ng Foon Chuen teaching the little boys to knit after her music classes were over. The needles were nearly as long as the little lads were tall but the wool was taking shape in their hands, guided by Miss Ng's seeing fingers. The needles were reduced in size and the training has gone on to the mutual satisfaction of all concerned and to the great joy of those at Ming Sum who care so much that the girls and boys may go out and live and work and give of their knowledge. Miss Ng receives her board and room and a small salary, thus greatly helping her self-respect in earning her living.

MING SUM SCHOOL for the BLIND
under the SOUTH CHINA MISSION
of the BOARD of FOREIGN MISSIONS
of the PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH in the U.S.A.

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